

Uncommon Denominator

Transsexuals Talk of Both Lives

Los Angeles

There are few commonalities among transsexuals. One is their extraordinary courage to speak out.

That may be due in part to their dedication to smoothing the way for others. Certainly, part is a lifetime longing for acceptance and understanding. For there is an awesome curiosity about transsexuals.

People ask, "Are you a boy or girl or what?"

"Can you have babies?" (They can't.)

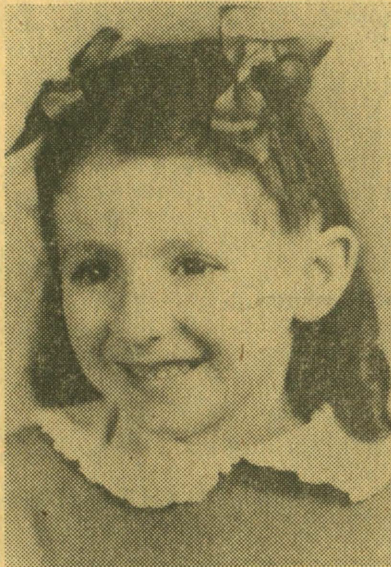
"How's your sex life?" (Fine, thank you; not perfect, but fine.)

Listen to their stories:

Jude Patton, 36, co-owner of a Fullerton (Orange county) store that distributes sex education books and materials. Member of a small self-help group for transsexuals. A college student. A husky, bearded man who four years ago underwent sex reassignment at Stanford University at a cost of \$6500.

"I frankly never have been happier in my life. My only regret is that I didn't have surgery sooner. I had conflicts in childhood, yes, but girls have an easier time as a tomboy. You're respected. You can play sports.

"I did know I was different. I

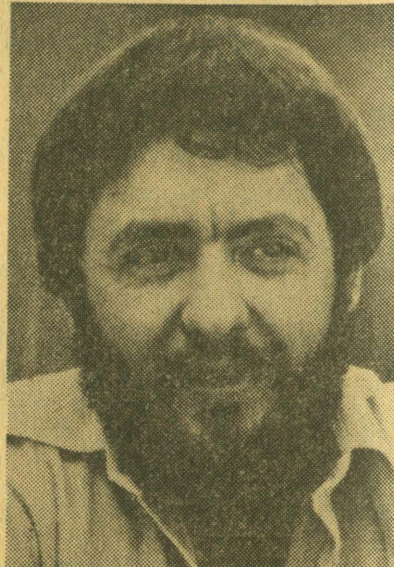


JUDY PATTON BECAME JUDE PATTON

'I hated my body. I hated my breasts. I hated my hips'

assumed I was gay. And although I was accepted as gay, I still felt different. I hated my body. I hated my breasts. I hated my hips. I always wanted to have long sideburns. My heroes were Roy Rogers and Robin Hood.

"After high school I wore a crew cut and Levi's. I couldn't get a job. I came to California from St. Louis and the first day in the promised land I got a job, working for a vet.



"I heard about the program at Stanford and once the door opened, it opened all the way — a miracle. Hormones made my voice drop and my fat changed from my hips to above the waist. Muscles started to form. I felt whole.

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Betty Sue [redacted], 35, a pre-operative transsexual. Bushy-haired, a size ten and proud of it. Lives alone in Hollywood, where she was born. Had two nonlegal

marriages with men.

"I felt confused as a child. I would hide myself in books and fantasize I was Sleeping Beauty or Nancy Drew. I didn't belong with the females. I didn't belong with the men. I didn't belong with gays. I didn't belong with straights.

"I got teased a lot. Kids would call me fairy or queer. I got kicked out of school for fighting and I got kicked out of the Navy for dressing as a woman.

"Emotionally I'm still having some problems. I overdosed in 1969. I wasn't comfortable living as a man. I was married to another woman and as far as I was concerned, it felt like a lesbian relationship. I had a son but I was trying to be a mother to him instead of a father.

"Then last year I almost had a nervous breakdown. I went into what I call a deep trance and they took me to Camarillo. I was in the young woman's ward. The doctor was stuttering and trying to figure out where to put me.

"I said, 'If you put me with the men, there's going to be trouble because of my breasts and the way I act and dress.' (Female hormones encourage breast growth.) He put me in with the women and there was no trouble. I had been on hormones so long I was chemically castrated — even if I wanted to do anything, which I didn't.



CARL KATZ WAS CHANGED INTO CAROL KATZ
'I always thought I was a girl but something was wrong'

"I need \$5000 now for my surgery. My insurance will pay \$3500 so I'm trying to save the rest. My mother said she'd go to the hospital with me when the time comes. My father's mad at me.

"I have kind of a love-hate thing about men. Right now, when I go with a guy, he has to be awfully sure of his masculinity or be a bisexual.

"I dated one guy who was married and I told him where to go. I felt if he was going to cheat on his wife, he'd cheat on his girl friend."

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Carol Katz, 35, a Brooklyn native who sentimentally wears the wedding band from a first marriage as a man. Lives with two cats in Van Nuys. Works as a documents clerk at the Veterans Administration regional office. Outgoing, graying, she paid \$2400 three years ago

for surgery at a private Colorado clinic.

"I always thought I was a girl but that something was wrong with me. I used to try to fight it with total macho. I built up my body. I joined the Boy Scouts, the Civil Air Patrol, the Military Police, the police reserves. I tried to put it out of my mind.

"Then in 1973 I tried to commit suicide by turning off the freeway at the San Diego and Ventura. I stopped before going over and decided to go to a shrink. I scored ultra feminine on the (gender) test.

"After my operation I felt such joy, I cried. I hadn't mutilated my body. I had released it. I'm comparatively happy now. I'm relatively accepted. I'm over six feet and my voice is deep. I'm not going to have any cosmetic surgery. I'm going to be myself.

"The facade is over."

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